



Application No. 09/865,141
Amendment Dated April 22, 2004
Reply to Office Action dated February 11, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

1 Claim 8 (currently amended): A solidifier for the solidification of a volume of
2 liquid having a reference density, said solidifier comprising:

3 a first absorbent,

4 a second absorbent,

5 **a third absorbent,**

6 said first absorbent having an apparent density less than the reference
7 density, whereby said first absorbent is positively buoyant relative to the liquid
8 sought to be solidified,

9 said second absorbent having an apparent density greater than the
10 reference density, whereby said second absorbent is negatively buoyant relative to
11 the liquid sought to be solidified,

12 **said third absorbent having an apparent density less than the reference**
13 **density, whereby said third absorbent is positively buoyant relative to the**
14 **liquid sought to be solidified, said third absorbent apparent density being**
15 **intermediate the apparent densities of said first and second absorbents,**

16 said first, [and] second **and third** absorbents being combined in a mixture
17 thereof, **said mixture comprising about fifty percent, by weight, of said second**
18 **absorbent, about ten percent, by weight, of said third absorbent, and about**
19 **forty percent, by weight, of said first absorbent,**

20 whereby when said first absorbent, [and] said second absorbent **and said**
21 **third absorbent** are introduced into the liquid, said first absorbent, [and] said
22 second absorbent **and said third absorbent** convert the liquid into a gel.

1 Claims 1-7 (cancelled)

1 Claim 9 (currently amended): The solidifier of Claim 8 wherein the average
2 particle size of said third absorbent is greater than the average particle size of said
3 second absorbent.

1 Claim 10 (currently amended): The solidifier of Claim 8 wherein each of said
2 **first, second and third** absorbents is in the form of a flowable powder.

1 Claim 11 (original): The solidifier of Claim 8 and further including
2 packaging for said mixture which is dissolvable or disintegrative when disposed in
3 said liquid to be solidified.

1 Claims 12-22 (cancelled)

1 Claim 23 (currently amended): A method for the solidification of a liquid
2 having a reference density, said method comprising the steps of:
3 mixing together a first absorbent, **a second absorbent and a third**
4 **absorbent, said first absorbent** having an apparent density less than the
5 reference density, whereby said first absorbent is positively buoyant relative to the
6 liquid to be solidified whereby said first absorbent floats adjacent the surface of the
7 liquid, [and at least one further] **said second** absorbent having an apparent
8 density greater than the reference density, whereby said [further] **second**
9 absorbent is negatively buoyant relative to the liquid to be solidified whereby said
10 [at least one further] **second** absorbent sinks toward the bottom of the liquid to be
11 solidified, **said third absorbent having an apparent density intermediate the**
12 **densities of said first and second absorbents and which renders said third**
13 **absorbent negatively buoyant relative to the liquid to be solidified**, and
14 introducing at least a portion of said mixture into the liquid to be solidified,
15 whereby said first absorbent, and [said] second absorbent **and said third**
16 **absorbent** convert the liquid into a gel.

1 Claim 24 (cancelled)

1 Claim 25 (currently amended): The method of Claim **23** [24] wherein said
2 [still further] **third** absorbent exhibits an average particle size greater than the
3 average particle size of said [at least one further] **second** absorbent.

1 Claim 31 (currently amended): A solidifier for the solidification of a volume
2 of liquid having a reference density, said solidifier comprising:
3 a first absorbent,
4 a second absorbent,
5 **a third absorbent,**

6 said first absorbent having an apparent density less than the reference
7 density, whereby said first absorbent is positively buoyant relative to the liquid
8 sought to be solidified,

9 said second absorbent having an apparent density greater than the
10 reference density, whereby said second absorbent is negatively buoyant relative to
11 the liquid sought to be solidified,

12 said third absorbent having an apparent density less than the reference
13 density, whereby said third absorbent is positively buoyant relative to the
14 liquid sought to be solidified, said third absorbent apparent density being
15 intermediate the apparent densities of said first and second absorbents,
16 said solidifier comprising about fifty percent, by weight, of said second
17 absorbent, about ten percent, by weight, of said third absorbent, and about
18 forty percent, by weight, of said first absorbent,

19 whereby when said first absorbent and said second absorbent are
20 introduced into the liquid, said first absorbent and said second absorbent convert
21 the liquid into a gel.

1 Claims 26-30 (cancelled)

1 Claim 32 (currently amended): The solidifier of Claim **31** [28] wherein the
2 average particle size of said third absorbent is greater than the average particle size
3 of said second absorbent.

1 Claims 33-36 (cancelled)

1 Claim 37 (currently amended): The solidifier of Claim **31** [28] wherein each
2 of said first absorbent, said second absorbent and said third absorbent is in the
3 form of a flowable powder.

1 Claim 38 (currently amended): The solidifier of Claim **31** [28] further
2 comprising packaging for said first absorbent, said second absorbent, and said

3 third absorbent, said packaging being dissolvable or disintegrative when disposed
4 in said liquid to be solidified.

1 Claim 39 (previously presented): The solidifier of Claim 38 wherein said
2 packaging comprises two or more compartments, each compartment containing a
3 portion of one or more of said first absorbent, said second absorbent, and said
4 third absorbent.

1 Claim 40 (previously presented): The solidifier of Claim 39 wherein said two
2 or more compartments exhibit different rates of dissolution or disintegration when
3 disposed in said liquid to be solidified.

1 Claim 41 (new): A solidifier for the solidification of a volume of liquid having
2 a reference density, said solidifier comprising:
3 a first absorbent;
4 a second absorbent; and
5 packaging for said first absorbent and said second absorbent, said
6 packaging being dissolvable or disintegrative when disposed in said liquid to be
7 solidified, said packaging comprising two or more compartments, each
8 compartment containing a portion of one or more of said first absorbent and said
9 second absorbent, said two or more compartments exhibiting different rates of
10 dissolution or disintegration when disposed in said liquid to be solidified;
11 said first absorbent having an apparent density less than the reference
12 density, whereby said first absorbent is positively buoyant relative to the liquid
13 sought to be solidified;
14 said second absorbent having an apparent density greater than the
15 reference density, whereby said second absorbent is negatively buoyant relative to
16 the liquid sought to be solidified;
17 whereby when said first absorbent and said second absorbent are
18 introduced into the liquid, said first absorbent and said second absorbent convert
19 the liquid into a gel.

1 Claim 42 (new): A solidifier for the solidification of a volume of liquid having
2 a reference density, said solidifier comprising:
3 a first absorbent;
4 a second absorbent;
5 a third absorbent; and
6 packaging for said first absorbent, said second absorbent, and said third
7 absorbent, said packaging being dissolvable or disintegrative when disposed in said
8 liquid to be solidified, said packaging comprising two or more compartments, each
9 compartment containing a portion of one or more of said first absorbent, said
10 second absorbent, and said third absorbent, said two or more compartments
11 exhibiting different rates of dissolution or disintegration when disposed in said
12 liquid to be solidified;
13 said first absorbent having an apparent density less than the reference
14 density, whereby said first absorbent is positively buoyant relative to the liquid
15 sought to be solidified;
16 said second absorbent having an apparent density greater than the
17 reference density, whereby said second absorbent is negatively buoyant relative to
18 the liquid sought to be solidified;
19 whereby when said first absorbent, said second absorbent and said third
20 absorbent are introduced into the liquid, said first absorbent, said second
21 absorbent and said third absorbent convert the liquid into a gel.